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New York

President:	Mr. Listre	(Argentina)
Members:	Bangladesh	Mr. Chowdhury
	Canada	Mr. Vámos-Goldman
	China	Mr. Chen Xu
	France	Mr. Dejammet
	Jamaica	Miss Durrant
	Malaysia	Mr. Hasmy
	Mali	Mr. Kasse
	Namibia	Mr. Andjaba
	Netherlands	Mr. Hamer
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	Tunisia	Mr. Ben Mustapha
	Ukraine	Mr. Yel'chenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Eldon
	United States of America	Mr. Holbrooke

Agenda

Briefing by Mr. Carl Bildt, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Balkans

00-31837 (E)

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The meeting resumed at 4.40 p.m.

Mr. Chen Xu (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation would like to thank Mr. Carl Bildt for his briefing. Since assuming his functions as the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Balkans, Mr. Bildt has done a great deal to promote the peace and stability of the region. We would like to express our appreciation for his efforts.

Over the years, the international community, including the United Nations, has worked hard to resolve the problems of the Balkans. The United Nations has carried out several activities in the region, including peacekeeping operations. Some of those were successful, and some have not achieved results satisfactory to the international community. Serious stock-taking of the experiences acquired and the lessons learned in the Balkans can therefore provide an important guide for future United Nations work.

The Chinese delegation believes that the effective realization of sustained peace and stability in the Balkans requires strict adherence to the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter, in particular to the principles of the peaceful settlement of disputes, non-interference in internal affairs and respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity. We also believe that the rights and interests of ethnic minorities in the countries concerned should be protected.

Sustained peace and development in the Balkans depend on the political will of the countries of the region, including the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and the constructive efforts on the part of the international community. The two complement each other, and neither is dispensable. At present, the restoration of a secure environment, the return of refugees and the economic rehabilitation of the region are urgent tasks facing the countries concerned and the international community. They are also important prerequisites for sustained peace and stability and common prosperity for all countries and ethnic communities in the region.

The Balkan countries and the international community have already made tremendous efforts in those areas, but the tasks facing us remain formidable. We believe that the international community should continue its support of the efforts of the countries of the region to realize stability and economic rehabilitation. In this regard, high priority should be given to helping them to realize self-governance and self-reliance by gradually reducing their dependency on external assistance, for after all, the comprehensive resolution of the problems of the Balkans ultimately lies in the hands of the countries and the peoples of the region themselves.

The Chinese Government and people have been watching the situation in the Balkans with concern. We support the efforts of regional countries and the United Nations to realize peace and development in the region. We are deeply concerned about the continuing deterioration of the situation in Kosovo. We hope that the international community will take measures to effectively protect the safety and security of all ethnic communities in Kosovo and to preserve peace and stability there.

In conclusion, we sincerely hope that the countries and the peoples of the Balkans will proceed from the fundamental interests of their respective peoples to deal with their historical, ethnic, religious and territorial problems in a common manner and to resolve their disputes through consultation and negotiation. That is not only in the fundamental interests of the peoples and countries of the region, but it is also crucial to the peace and stability of Europe and the world.

Mr. Vámos-Goldman (Canada): We too thank Mr. Bildt for his briefing and agree very much that the solution to the problems that plague the Balkans — such as populations displaced by war, illegal migration, organized crime, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, and violations of human rights — can be found only in a broader regional context.

Given the interactive nature and focus of this debate, we would like to restrict ourselves to one comment and one question from the many issues that Mr. Bildt has briefed the Council on.

The one comment regards the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. In our view, the United Nations walks a delicate line between the imperative to provide for legitimate humanitarian needs and the need to ensure that the Government, led by an indicted war criminal, is isolated. We noted in Mr. Bildt's recent remarks in Sarajevo that broad sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia have heightened corruption and criminality. Canada believes that sanctions targeted against the regime continue to have an important role in isolating the Milosevic Government. In addition, if the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia wishes to benefit from regional initiatives such as the Stability Pact, it must

clearly demonstrate its commitment to reform and to building a secure, democratic society.

My question concerns Montenegro. We agree that we need to encourage Montenegro to continue to pursue prudently its process of democratic and economic reform. Mr. Bildt mentioned the need for the international community to provide financial assistance to Montenegro. We would be interested in his ideas on how this can be facilitated in regional initiatives such as the Stability Pact, and how these can be used to further the gains already made in the interests of broad regional prosperity and stability.

Mr. Eldon (United Kingdom): I can be very brief.

First, I would like to thank Mr. Bildt for his briefing this morning and for his extremely thoughtful and perceptive analysis. I think the image of balancing disintegration with integration, and ensuring that in the final analysis those in favour of integration win out, is very helpful to us all in this connection. It is also clear that, as Mr. Bildt has said, the chances of success in the Balkans will be substantially improved when all the key outside players can work together.

It is similarly important that, as he has said too, we should try and broaden the base of the dialogue with those in the region to ensure that whatever long-term structure we design will remain viable in the long term. Here, I think it was useful that he highlighted the conundrum of how to deal with the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

This is clearly something to which there will be no easy solution as long as those indicted for war crimes remain in power, but — and here I would disagree with what Ambassador Lavrov said this morning — the solution to it is not to somehow lessen the weight of the institutions and factors involved, particularly the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. A crime against humanity is, after all, a crime against humanity. None of us should forget that and none of us should forget either that the Tribunal is an impartial body, was set up with the support of all members of the Security Council and must be allowed to do its work.

Related to the issue of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is, as Mr. Bildt has rightly reminded us, Montenegro. The situation in Montenegro and the linkage and interaction between the Serbian and Montenegran Governments have been of concern to us, too. I would be very interested to hear Mr. Bildt's assessment of where Montenegro is going and what more the international community as a whole can do to ensure that it does not go bad.

Finally, as Ambassador Dejammet has emphasized — and I would like to say that I agree with nearly every word he said this morning — this is going to require continuing support from the international community on a long-term and sustained basis. We all know the particular problems of Kosovo and, as many speakers have said, we will have an opportunity to discuss those next week. But I would like to say that, over the weekend, the United Kingdom announced a doubling of its contribution to the United Nations civilian police in Kosovo. We hope that, in some small way, that will be an important index of the willingness of us all to fill the very glaring gap that exists in that area.

Mr. Andjaba (Namibia): Let me congratulate you, Sir, and your delegation for organizing this meeting and warmly acknowledge and thank the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Mr. Carl Bildt, for his comprehensive and useful briefing on the situation in the Balkans.

My delegation welcomes this opportunity to discuss the overall situation in the Balkans, bearing in mind the complexities of cultural, economic, social and political problems facing the people of south-eastern Europe today. We note with dissatisfaction that the general situation in south-eastern Europe was by and large precipitated by the political instability generated by the events leading up to and following the break-up of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. In the process, the war that caused the break-up of the federation destroyed viable commercial markets, severed transportation links and created refugee problems unheard of in Europe since the Second World War. The number of refugees and displaced persons; the destruction of properties; the broken families and senseless killings, also known as ethnic cleansing, have become a telling story in the region and elsewhere. However, the social history of the region provides the context in which resolution of these problems can be envisaged.

In this connection, we concur with the views of the Secretary-General, the States members of the European Union and, indeed, the rest of the international community that a regional framework for the stability of south-eastern Europe should have its foundation in the United Nations Charter and relevant international treaties and conventions.

The security situation in the Balkans, punctuated by the latest events in the town of Mitrovica in Kosovo, begs the international community to move expeditiously in addressing the problems of these countries in a regional framework, taking into account the cultural characteristics and sensibilities of various communities. We express our hope that the outbreak of violence in Mitrovica between the Serbs and Albanians will not escalate further to jeopardize the implementation of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999). My delegation looks forward to a proper briefing on that situation.

We believe that, in order to resolve the situation in the Balkans, a series of regional security conferences ought to be instituted by the international community to provide a comprehensive settlement plan which entails, among others, the following elements:

First, the rights of refugees and displaced persons to return to their homes and countries of origin with dignity must be guaranteed and their properties restored. Secondly, the Stability Pact should be reviewed and adjusted to include the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Thirdly, institutional capacity-building, training and socio-economic programmes should be provided, which would ease the entry of these countries into the larger economic market of the European Union.

Whereas the international community provides the people of the Balkans with the assistance needed to rebuild social institutions and economic stability, it is equally essential for the Balkan people to cooperate with the international community in order to ease their integration into the larger European economic system. In this regard, my delegation commends the pledging conference held in Sarajevo to generate sufficient resources for the region, as well as the adoption of a common position for the establishment of the Stability Pact.

Finally, we salute the Member States, the United Nations agencies and other international organizations currently participating in one form or another in maintaining peace and stability in the Balkans.

Miss Durrant (Jamaica): Like previous speakers, I wish to thank Mr. Bildt for his briefing on the situation in the Balkans. We have appreciated his frank assessment of what needs to be done by the international community and by the countries concerned if the self-sustaining stability to which Mr. Bildt referred is to be achieved. We appreciate the fact that his position as Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on the Balkans has provided him with a very useful vantage point from which to see the problems of each country as part of a larger mosaic and points to the need to have a comprehensive settlement which must encompass the region as a whole.

As Mr. Bildt pointed out, the Balkan region preoccupied the international community for most of the decade of the 1990s and, while there is reason for optimism in some cases, we recognize that there is still much to be done. The recent outbreaks of violence in Kosovo indicate that there is still a long way to go and we are concerned that incidents such as those in Mitrovica will further set back the fragile peace process.

We agree that there is still a critical role for the United Nations in peace-building in the Balkans. We see that the entrenchment of peace and security is an essential prerequisite for the development of the region, including the full integration of refugees and internally displaced persons into the societies.

Peaceful coexistence and the building of a multi-ethnic society are critical to the long-term development of the Balkans, and we must emphasize that there cannot be discrimination on the basis of religion, nationality or ethnicity, because as long as these persist there will be no real progress. We therefore strongly condemn any ethnic or other violence based on any discrimination, and in this regard we emphasize the importance that we attach to the work of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.

My delegation believes that there are several areas in which the United Nations must continue to work if it is to assist in peace-building, reconstruction and development efforts. These include administrative reform; the maintenance of law and order, including the establishment of effective and efficient judicial and law-enforcement systems; the safe return of refugees and internally displaced persons to their places of origin; the combating of corruption; and the overall strengthening of civil society.

The strengthening of local institutions and the building of capacity are also integral components of peace-building efforts. These efforts cannot by themselves bring about the desired results, and we see the ultimate success of the United Nations peace-building efforts in the Balkans and the region as a whole depending on a number of factors, including the strong political will of the leaders, regional cooperation and the

commitment of the international community to assist the process.

The regional framework for cooperation, as exemplified in the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe, demonstrates the need for coordination between various initiatives in the region, and we hope that these will provide an incentive for the rebuilding of the Balkans and facilitate the region's integration into the wider community.

We agree with Mr. Bildt that there will have to be dialogue on which a consensus can be based. As he said, any lasting agreement must meet the minimum demands of all and the maximum demands of none. I therefore wish to congratulate Mr. Bildt for his efforts to promote peace and security in the region and wish him continued success.

Mr. Kasse (Mali) (*spoke in French*): I too should like to thank the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Balkans, Mr. Carl Bildt, for his very instructive briefing. The situation in the Balkans is complex, and stability is far from being a reality in that region, as the recent events in Mitrovica have made clear.

Nevertheless, we believe that there are grounds for optimism, because the time is ripe for discussion aimed at finding a definitive and comprehensive solution to the long-lasting conflict in the Balkans. We support the efforts made by Mr. Bildt, and we are firmly convinced that national reconciliation, reconstruction, solidarity, security and a regional approach, *inter alia*, remain the pillars of any comprehensive solution to the conflicts in the Balkans.

The Security Council must render its full support to the search for a regional solution that would safeguard all of the negotiations under way. We wish Mr. Bildt every success in his mission.

Mr. Ben Mustapha (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): I should like at the outset to thank Mr. Bildt, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Balkans, for his candid and exhaustive statement on the situation in the region. I believe that the approach he advocated in his statement to finding a solution to the crisis in the Balkans is based on an in-depth knowledge of the situation in the region and is marked by its comprehensive nature.

My country has followed closely the developments in the Balkans and welcomes the efforts of all of the parties that are actively working to establishment peace, security and stability in that region. We would like in particular to encourage all the peace missions in the Balkans which are achieving positive results despite the very difficult conditions.

The question of refugees and displaced persons is at the heart of the Balkan issue and enables the international community to assess the development of the situation. We wish to express our concern as to the fate of the refugees and displaced persons, and we appeal to all of the parties to promote their return and to find a solution to this important issue. In this connection, we welcome the commendable efforts of all of the humanitarian agencies, in particular those of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

My delegation believes that the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe proposed by the European Union represents an opportunity for the Balkan region to promote peace and security. It is a suitable framework which should be implemented rapidly in order to be translated into reality through the promotion of political and economic reforms, development and the strengthening of security in the region.

I believe also that the inclusion of the region in a wider area will promote integration by marginalizing all types of extremist forces.

We would like also to pay tribute to the Charter of good-neighbourliness, stability, security and cooperation adopted at Bucharest at the Third Meeting of Heads of State and Government of South-East European Countries. This opens a new chapter in the history of the region and attests to the commitment of the parties to respond positively to the efforts of the international community to restore confidence in the future of the region.

Mr. Hamer (Netherlands): I should like to thank Mr. Bildt for his briefing and for his thoughtful analysis of the problems of the Balkans. One of the conclusions to be drawn from his analysis is that the international community cannot hope to achieve its goal of self-sustaining stability for the Balkans while the Milosevic regime remains in power in Belgrade, not just because Mr. Milosevic and his clique are under indictment from the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, but at least as much because they continue to be the principal representatives of the tendency towards violent disintegration to which Mr. Bildt referred.

They have been the main protagonists of that tendency towards violent disintegration ever since 25 June 1991, and they remain so to this day in Kosovo and

in Montenegro. The only way out of this conundrum is for the people of Serbia to put a stop to Mr. Milosevic and his fellow disintegrationists, to follow the example of the other republics of the former Yugoslavia in electing a democratic government, and to cast their lot with the other peoples of the Balkans in a new vision of regional cooperation and integration.

The Stability Pact provides the most viable framework for a comprehensive approach to restructuring the region. An issue requiring priority attention of the parties to the Pact continues to be that of the voluntary return of refugees and internally displaced persons. Cooperation on the voluntary return of refugees and internally displaced persons is as essential to self-sustaining stability as the big infrastructural projects currently under discussion. We hope that this issue will be included in the quick-start package to be discussed at the regional funding conference next month.

Mr. Holbrooke (United States of America) It is a great honour to be here again, and I apologize for having missed so much of today's meeting, but like you, Mr. President, I was equally preoccupied today with our concurrent meeting in the Economic and Social Council with Dr. Piot and the discussion on AIDS and Africa, which I think was a very important step forward in the close cooperation of all of us in dealing with the AIDS in Africa problem. I am particularly sorry I missed the comments of my good friend the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, but since I spent a good deal of time with him this morning, I have a very good idea of his position, as well as through the report I got from my colleagues.

My main purpose in joining the Council today is to speak personally about Carl Bildt for a moment, because according to his own book, I was the reason he ended up where he is today, by offering him the job to begin with, in a secret interview in Washington, which at the time he did not realize was a job interview. So I have come here today both to apologize to him and to praise him. We have been friends and very close colleagues since 1994, since that first meeting that he has described rather amusingly in his own memoirs, and as a co-Chairman of the Dayton peace conference, he was my closest colleague at moments of very high drama. I am delighted that the Secretary-General has given him this important assignment, and I want to state publicly that our Government listens to everything Carl Bildt says with the greatest attention, not simply because he represents the Secretary-General, but because of his extensive experience and authority in regard to these issues.

I think that Carl Bildt's report to us today should encourage us somewhat in regard to Bosnia and focus us on where we need to go to move forward. It is, in my view, a simple question of two things: leadership by the international community — and in Bosnia and Kosovo this is slightly different structurally, but the same nations are involved in both, although under different structures; and secondly, the underlying problem that plagues all of the Balkans to this day, and has since 1991, and that is the goals and designs of the leadership in Belgrade.

In regard to the first, it is a question of resources, leadership and will, and all too often we have institutional rivalries and public criticism between the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the United Nations, or between the United States and the European Union, or between individuals, when the fact is that we all have the same objective and we are all pulling for the same goal. Some of this criticism is not surprising, and it does not trouble me very much, but I do think we have to remember that we are all on the same team, trying for the same objective, which in Bosnia is to make the Dayton Peace Agreement work.

In regard to Bosnia, I am encouraged by some of what Carl Bildt has reported, and I think we should take very carefully his comments on refugee returns to minority areas and strengthening the joint institutions. The High Representative's office in Bosnia is critical to success. It has been filled now by three outstanding representatives of the European Union, Carl Bildt himself, Carlos Westendorp, and now Wolfgang Petritsch. We must support them.

In regard to the region, I share entirely Carl Bildt's view that the newly elected Government of President Mesić and Prime Minister Račan is a major step forward, and I believe that the number-one test of that Government in regard to the region will come in Mostar. I believe that what happens in Mostar will be determining for the future of Bosnia. It is the most broken city in Europe at this moment — Mitrovica is the most dangerous, Mostar is the most broken. In Mostar, I think Zagreb holds the key, and I call on our friends from Croatia to help fix the broken city of Mostar.

As Carl has so accurately noted, we remain handicapped by the actions of the regime in Belgrade, and we also remain handicapped by the fact that a

number of indicted war criminals are still at large. I believe that the war crimes tribunal and others should reinvigorate their efforts to bring indicted war criminals to justice. I am not going to talk at length about Kosovo today, because I know that we have a very important meeting scheduled for that subject next week, when General Reinhardt and Mr. Kouchner will address us, but I do want to welcome very strongly the announcement of the United Kingdom over the weekend that it will double its contribution to the civil police in Kosovo. This is an extremely important action and one that I think will help the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo and the Kosovo force achieve their goals. So while reserving further comments on Kosovo for next week's important meeting, I want to commend you, Mr. President, for holding this meeting today, and commend Carl Bildt for his report. I encourage him to continue to be the eyes and ears of the Secretary-General and to keep us in the Security Council, and through us the international community, apprised of his views of what we can do in order to achieve our goal in Bosnia, which is to implement the Dayton Peace Agreement; and in Kosovo, where our goal is more elusive and more difficult to reach, but with his help and assistance I am confident we will be able to move in that direction.

The President *(spoke in Spanish)*: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of the Argentine Republic.

I would like first of all to thank Mr. Carl Bildt for the views he has shared with us and his very precise and detailed report, which are very valuable because of his experience in the Balkans.

We believe that a long-term strategy designed to bring about peace and stability in the Balkans depends on a whole set of factors ranging from the implementation of political, social and economic reforms to reconciliation among the countries of the region, as well as reconciliation among the people within countries. There is therefore an internal as well as an international dimension, and sometimes there is also a historical background that dates back centuries. As Mr. Bildt reminded us, the first decade of the twentieth century, like the last, was a time of great convulsions in the Balkans, and that was where the incident that set off the First World War took place. The agents of disintegration in the region can be overcome only when all the participants — the population and the leadership — realize the need for coexistence in a framework of pluralism. This is the basis for a democratic society based on rule of law, without which we have only a society dominated by fear, violence and intolerance.

In this context, it seems particularly important to us that we respond appropriately to the plight of refugees and internally displaced persons. This is necessarily a long-term process, and the assistance of the international community, particularly from this Organization, will be required to prevent further confrontations and to create the necessary conditions for the establishment of international peace and security in that region.

I now resume my functions as President.

I call on Mr. Bildt so that he may respond to the questions and comments that have been addressed to him.

Mr. Bildt: I have been listening with keen interest to the comments of members, and I will try to answer all or most of the questions that have been put. I note with deep satisfaction that there is widespread support for the ambitions and the efforts that are under way to set up structures of self-sustaining stability in the region, but also an understanding that we are not there yet, to put it very mildly — that there are major challenges ahead and that this is going to be a difficult time.

A number of speakers referred to the situation in Kosovo. I am not going to go into the details of that; the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Bernard Kouchner, and General Reinhardt will be here next week, and, as Ambassador Holbrooke said, the Council will have an important meeting on the details of Kosovo. But I would just like to reinforce what I said: that Kosovo is a difficult but small place within a region that is unstable. The task that has been given to the United Nations in running Kosovo de facto is complicated not only by the fact that there is no peace agreement but also by the instabilities in the region, notably — as referred to by several speakers — the situation in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and in Serbia.

The representative of the Russian Federation raised a number of issues that had to do with the wider approach in the region: the coordination of the different attempts under way, as well as the way in which we deal with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and with Serbia. Let me say, as I think I indicated at the beginning, that the regional approach to the issues is one that has been there with the United Nations system from the very beginning, especially coming out of the fact that the United Nations system was called upon early in the 1990s

to deal with the humanitarian consequences of these different wars. And they are indeed regional by nature: there is no way in which you can deal with these issues taking them piece by piece; you need to deal with the region. So we have been advocating a regional approach from the very start.

The launch last summer of the Stability Pact, an initiative of the European Union and supported by the other major Powers, was a recognition by the international community of the fact that you cannot deal with the countries in isolation; you have to deal with the entire region. I have been trying to facilitate the support of the United Nations system for the efforts of the Stability Pact. We are now heading towards a couple of important meetings; I think it was the representative of the Netherlands who referred to the funding conference that is coming up at the end of March.

But let me say, concerning the Stability Pact — and these are words that I know are very much supported by its Special Coordinator, Mr. Bodo Hombach, who is responsible for it — that the Pact is a two-way process. It takes two to tango. It is not a funding mechanism for projects in the countries of the region. It is also an undertaking and a commitment by the countries of the region that they themselves will take initiatives to start to cooperate. For the one to work requires that the other work as well; that is essential.

Let me also stress that it is not primarily a question of the reconstruction of the region after the devastating wars there. I normally refer, as I did in my presentation today, to the three Rs that I consider essential. The first is reform; these countries all, to a greater or a lesser degree, need substantial economic and political reform. The second is reconciliation, that very, very difficult concept and that very, very difficult word that is absolutely essential for moving forward after war. And the third is reintegration; that is necessary not only for political reasons, but also for plain economic reasons: there is no way in which we can ever revive the economies of these countries if we do not allow the trade flows and the commercial contacts and the integration to be there.

So there is a need for reform; there is a need for reconciliation; and there is a need for reintegration. That is part of the approach of the Stability Pact.

That being said, I am convinced that when we move forward towards a political settlement for the region there is a need to do something that goes beyond what is at present on the table. There is a need for a structure that, in its scope, in its firmness and in its perspective to the future, goes beyond what we have had on the table so far.

Concerning the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Serbia, I think it was the representative of Canada who said that the United Nations was walking a delicate line. That was the understatement of the day, I guess. It is a very complex problem. On the one hand, we have a concern for the ordinary human beings; we want to help people in need. And there are quite a number of people who are in a rather desperate situation in Serbia. I think it was the representative of the Russian Federation who referred to the fact that this might well be the largest refugee community that we have in Europe; and they are in a country which might well be the poorest country in Europe by now, after not only the consequences of war but also the total absence of any sort of reform process have brought that country down so desperately.

So the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other agencies are keen to help. But we are there to help the people, not to fund the regime. That distinction is important, and it also requires vigilance on our part, because the structures of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and of Serbia are to some extent deliberately corrupt. I say "deliberately corrupt" because there is a risk of them setting up structures which are really meant to fund the regime rather than to help the people. We must, of course, be on our guard there, not only for political reasons but also for the simple reason that we want our money to reach the ordinary people and not be a funding mechanism for a regime that has difficulties funding itself in other ways.

I do not think there is any solution to the political or economic problems of the region without Yugoslavia and without Serbia. We want Serbia, and we want Yugoslavia, as part of this. But we can only regret the fact that Yugoslavia has excluded itself to a very large extent, first, by retaining among its leaders those who have been indicted by the International Tribunal for crimes against humanity — and it has been our policy in the past, and I think it must remain our policy in the future, not to have any dealings with such personalities. And it has also made life somewhat more difficult for itself by not undertaking the reforms that are necessary in order to have a functioning democratic life and a functioning economy. This is a dilemma for the international community, but it is a major problem for Serbia and a major problem for the region.

The situation in Montenegro was alluded to by several representatives. Let me just state that I am very concerned about the situation as it is developing. I believe it is moving in the wrong direction marginally faster than I would have anticipated a couple of weeks ago. The reason is the moves we see on the ground by Milosevic in terms of building up forces and building up capabilities for direct intervention. There is no doubt whatsoever in my mind that he is actively creating the preconditions for exercising that option. We have seen him creating special so-called military police units that are obviously recruited on the basis of political loyalty and that are now deployed at critical points throughout Montenegro. We have seen him setting up a special and separate television network in Montenegro, installed by military forces on military installations in order to be the propaganda arm of any overt intervention.

These are moves that are in no way compatible with the federal constitution of Yugoslavia. They serve to aggravate a situation between Serbia and Montenegro to which it should be in the interest of all friends of Yugoslavia to try to seek a solution. These are not only concerns in terms of the stability of the region, but also, in my view, a threat to the survival of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

I was asked what can be done to provide help and support. Obviously one thing that can be done is to highlight what is happening and highlight the concerns of the international community, because these actions do have regional implications. Another is of course to be willing and able to extend financial help to the authorities of Montenegro, who are, as I pointed out, subject to sort of double sanctions, in a way that is unfortunate.

I know that efforts are under way by the European Union, by the United States of America and others. There is a need to do more. The United Nations system — the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs — is very active in terms of providing humanitarian assistance to all those who are in need of it in Montenegro. And due to the political and other circumstances, that is quite a number of people.

Several of the speakers — the representatives of Malaysia, Tunisia, Namibia, the Netherlands — have highlighted the issue of the return of refugees. I cannot stress too strongly how important this is, in my opinion — and not only for the obvious humanitarian reason, but also, I would say, in terms of the future political stability of the region.

It is not entirely certain that everyone who has been expelled or driven away wants to return to the places where these horrible events happened. But if we refuse people the right to return, we create a difficult situation for the future. People who are refused the right to return become a reservoir of revenge in the future in the region. This is detrimental to the region's political stability.

In this regard, within the framework of the Stability Pact, the Humanitarian Issues Working Group — which has been in operation since the early 1990s, under the leadership of Mrs. Ogata — is continuing its work. We are discussing with the Stability Pact different ways of further integrating this Working Group's efforts into the work of economic aid and conditionality and so forth.

Finally, some words about Bosnia, which brings me to Ambassador Holbrooke and his kind words, starting with Georgetown, which might be somewhat outside the scope of the Security Council. I think both he and myself have a particular emotional attachment to that country and what he managed to achieve in 1995. I was fortunate enough to play a small role in that particular process. I think it is worth stressing that, although that is a very ambitious peace agreement, there are major problems in Bosnia. We are making progress. It is of course slower than some of us would like, but there is progress.

I would have liked to see a greater sense of responsibility shown by the leaders of Bosnia itself. I was particularly disappointed when the House of Representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina a couple of weeks ago refused even to consider the draft for election laws that are necessary in order to build a functioning common State and common society. But that notwithstanding, progress is being made. And I would very much like to support the comments by Ambassador Holbrooke on Mostar, on the role that can be played by the new political leadership in Croatia in order to overcome that particularly difficult aspect of the problems in Bosnia. If we can make progress on this issue, I think we can further progress on all of the other Bosnian issues.

That brings me finally to what might be one of my key points for my presentation: that while we did achieve, in 1995, in Bosnia, a peace agreement that set the rules for the internal structure of Bosnia after the war, as well as the external position of Bosnia in the

region, we do not have that in the case of Kosovo. This makes the situation of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo and the task particularly difficult. It makes it particularly difficult to move forward with a regional agenda for seeking self-sustaining structures of stability.

We must be ready to start to consider within the framework of this Council how we can move forward with the political agenda leading to a peace settlement for Kosovo, while remaining aware of the fact that as long as we have the situation in Belgrade, such progress is going to be virtually impossible. But that should not stop our efforts.

Then, perhaps we can continue with the work that was started in the early part of the 1990s, in which several of us around the table were active. There is a need to recognize that we have done a number of things, but there is also a long ways to go until we can say that we have self-sustaining stability in this war-torn part of Europe.

The President *(spoke in Spanish)*: I thank Mr. Bildt for his clarifications and for the replies he has provided to the questions that were put to him during the debate.

I would like to welcome the Secretary-General, who has joined our meeting.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I apologize for asking for the floor once again, but I wanted to comment on the reply that Mr. Bildt gave to some of my questions, *inter alia*, with respect to his assessment of the prospects for interaction with the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

As Council members may recall, I asked whether the Security Council resolutions could possibly be implemented, whether a regional and comprehensive approach to the Balkans could possibly be ensured if we deliberately isolate the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. To be frank, I did not hear any reply to that question. I heard a confirmation of the fact that it is impossible to interact with Milosevic's Government because that Government is headed by individuals who have been indicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia.

I already had an opportunity to state that in our view the activities of the Tribunal have been politicized to a certain extent. If, for example, the Tribunal were to indict someone else in the region, or in other countries, or if it should indict one of the leaders of the opposition in the Yugoslavia — and there have been hints in the mass media that such things were possible — how would we then react? Would we all then be hostages to the decisions of the Tribunal? That would most likely be a very simple solution. But at the same time, it is too simplistic. Life is always more complicated and does not allow everything to be foisted upon one individual or one regime.

Mr. Bildt said that President Milosevic is preparing to take certain actions against Montenegro, and we have also heard just recently that it was precisely President Milosevic who provoked the unrest that occurred in Mitrovica, in Kosovo. But no one is denying that those incidents, which are continuing, are the fault of extremists and were provoked by former members of the Kosovo Liberation Army — which, even though it has ceased to exist on paper, has given birth to certain new groups with new names, groups that are making incursions into other regions of Serbia from Kosovo, and so forth.

If we are speaking openly here, and openly criticizing the Belgrade regime, then it would probably be fair to also fairly assess the neighbouring countries. This is because there continues to be an illegal inflow of arms and drugs across the border, first and foremost into Kosovo, as the mass media sometimes remind us. But we should not forget about this in the Security Council when we are trying to follow and integrated, regional approach to the problems of the region. That integrated, regional approach requires that we speak the truth about everything that is happening there. If we take the position of blaming only one regime for everything, then the entire integrated approach becomes hostage to such an analysis.

But let me repeat what I said earlier today. If the voters confirm the current leadership in the elections in Serbia and Yugoslavia, then what are we going to do? Are we then going to recommend a violent overthrow of the regime? Or are we going to say that we have to wait another four years before we involve Yugoslavia in an effort to find an integrated, regional solution?

Let me conclude with what I began with this morning: Yugoslavia is a full-fledged member of the Dayton process. It is a full-fledged participant in the agreements set out in resolution 1244 (1999). Yugoslavia is a full-fledged participant in the settlement principles with respect to Prevlaka adopted by the Security Council.

Implementing those resolutions without Yugoslavia is impossible. I would call upon all of us to predicate our positions on the fact that those decisions must be implemented. Implementing them through the isolation of a Government that is legally in power is impossible.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I call on the Secretary-General.

The Secretary-General: Let me first of all apologize for joining the Council late, but this was my first day back and I had to tackle some urgent issues. But I wanted to come to this meeting, to hear Mr. Bildt and to participate in the briefing.

Let me say that what you have heard today from Mr. Bildt is going to be one in a series of discussions and briefings on the region. You heard from Mr. Bildt today, and you will be hearing next from Mr. Klein, who is my representative in Bosnia, and then you will hear from Special Representative Bernard Kouchner and General Reinhardt, who will be coming from Kosovo.

I think it is important that we discuss the region as well as Kosovo because we are operating in a very difficult neighbourhood. Without understanding what is happening in the neighbourhood, we will find it extremely difficult to make progress. I will follow these briefings up in April with a comprehensive report that will touch on what is happening in the region and on our operations in Kosovo, so that we can move forward and take decisions with a broader picture in mind.

I think Ambassador Lavrov is right in raising the question he has raised, but I do not think it is Mr. Bildt who should answer the question. I think some of these issues will be raised when I submit the report in April. I think the question that has been raised has lots of impact on our activities, on elections and on other things. If we are going to go ahead with elections, and if we want to register the Serbs and have them participate, can we go to register them in Serbia without reference to Belgrade? There are all sorts of issues involved, and they will be raised. I do not think it is for Mr. Bildt to answer.

So I would ask the Russian Ambassador to be patient. These questions are being discussed, and we will come back to them. I think Mr. Bildt focused on regional issues today, not wanting to usurp the role of Mr. Kouchner, from whom the Council will hear. I think some of these issues should be reserved for him. So if Ambassador Lavrov will be patient, we will get back to the issues he has raised.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 5.45 p.m.